

Reading Toolkit: Grade 7 Objective 2.A.4.g

Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Informational Text

Indicator 4. Analyze important ideas and messages in informational text

Objective g. Synthesize ideas from text

Assessment Limits:

From one text or across multiple texts

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Lesson Seeds

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Activities

- Provide students with an uncaptioned picture/illustration from an informational passage. Have students make predictions about what is happening in the picture/illustration. Have students read the accompanying passage and then judge how accurate were their predictions. A similar procedure with a twist is to divide students into groups and give them all the same picture but tell them that each group has a different picture. Have them share group interpretations with the class without revealing the picture until the conclusion.
- Provide students with an informational passage to read. After students have read give students a conclusion using information from the article. Have students return to the text and highlight or record the information that would lead to this conclusion. The reverse can be done. Give students the supporting information and have them draw the conclusion.
- Place students in 7 small groups. Provide each group with an informational passage and a chart where the following elements are recorded: Text Purpose, Intended Audience, Author's Argument, Viewpoint, or Perspective, Main Idea/s, Message/s, Information Unrelated to Main Idea, and Relationship between Ideas. Assign each group a specialty that aligns with an element on the chart. Rotate among the groups 7 different informational passages. Each group will read the passage and record a response for their assigned specialty. Once the full rotation is complete and charts are complete for each passage, the groups reorganize with an "expert" from each of the 7 elements in each group. Since each element has now been analyzed, students will conduct a review of the entire passage. Each group will report to the entire class how each element of the passage contributed to understanding the entire text.
- First model this activity for students. Present students with an informational passage for which text purpose, intended audience, author's argument, viewpoint, or perspective, main idea/s, message/s, information unrelated to main idea, and relationship between ideas has been identified. Teacher and students will discuss how each element contributes to understanding the entire text. The teacher will change one element, present it to the students and discuss how that change may alter the understanding of individual elements or the entire text. Students practice the same process either individually, with a partner, or in small groups. Once completed, students will share results with another student, pair of students, or small group.

Clarification

Reading Grade 7 Indicator 2.A.4

To show proficiency of the skills stated in this indicator, a reader will express an understanding of the key points or thoughts in the text, which are **the important ideas and messages**. These are sometimes directly stated in the text, but for more complex texts, a reader will determine the implied, important ideas and messages by synthesizing ideas across the text(s).

In order to understand important ideas or messages in a text, a reader should **determine the author's apparent purpose for writing**. The author's purpose, either implied or directly stated, is the main reason for the text. Most authors write to inform, persuade, or to express personal ideas relative to his or her selected topic. Authors write for different audiences; an author's intended audience should be apparent through the author's choice of topic, diction, organization, and graphic aids. Knowing these features and the intended audience for a text helps a reader determine a purpose for reading, which will enhance a reader's understanding of the text as a whole.

Once a reader understands an author's or text's purpose, he or she can speculate as to **how someone might use the text**. To do so, a reader explores the application of the text to personal or content-specific use. A critical reader applies the text for personal or content specific use and to determine issues and ideas within a text or across texts and their personal and societal implications.

The ability to **distinguish between facts and opinions** is a prerequisite reading skill for **identifying and explaining an author's argument, viewpoint, or perspective**. A fact can be defined as something that can be proven true while an opinion is a belief or feeling about a subject. Authors use a combination of facts and opinions in their writing, most often using facts to support their opinions. Once a reader can identify an author's opinion on a topic, the main idea or message can be more clearly understood. An author's opinion with the evidence, details, and examples used to support the opinion become the **author's argument, viewpoint, or perspective**.

When **stating and supporting main ideas and messages**, a reader must first identify the main idea of the text. To do so, a reader must identify the topic or subject of the text, which is often evident in the title or first paragraph(s) of an informational text. Then, after reading an entire text, a reader must identify the main point that the author/text makes about the topic or subject. The author's message is the same thing as the main idea; however, a message is usually present in more complex, subjective text. A message is often more author-centered, whereas a main idea is more text-centered. If the main idea or message is not directly stated in the text, a reader must use the details and information in the text to infer the main idea or message. A reader supports the main idea or message by using details from the text that relate to it and that help him/her understand the main idea. This process can be done for the entire text or for a small portion of text.

Summarizing or paraphrasing a text or a portion of a text is an essential skill for a reader when comprehending informational text. A reader is better able to determine the important ideas and messages in text if he/she is able to summarize it. To do so, a reader must state the main idea in his/her own words and then select only details from the text that contribute to the identified main idea. Paraphrasing, when a reader restates an idea in his or her own words, is a key step to summarizing a text. This can be done for a small portion of text, such as a paragraph, as well as for a chapter or the entire text.

Authors use details and examples in their writing to clarify, highlight, or enhance their ideas. A critical reader will be able to identify **information not related, or peripheral, to the main idea of a text**. Doing so will help a reader disregard redundant as well as extraneous information when summarizing the text or identifying the main idea or message. Especially for complex text, a reader may analyze the effect this extraneous information has on the main idea or message and make decisions or draw conclusions about why an author used that information. This skill is useful as readers develop their own opinions and ideas relative to a text.

When a reader compares and contrasts textual ideas, elements, and features within and across texts, he/she is **identifying relationships between and among ideas**. Authors also organize their ideas to show a sequence of ideas or to show cause and effect. Once a reader identifies a relationship that exists among ideas in a text, he/she can think more analytically about that relationship. A critical reader will also make **connections to prior knowledge**, which are the beliefs or background a reader brings to a text.

In order to **draw conclusions about and make generalizations from informational text**, a reader should first be able to state the main idea as well as to summarize a text. When a reader draws conclusions, he/she uses information from the text—such as the text patterns or text features—that can be either stated or implied. A reader makes a judgment or a decision that is new to him or her since it is not directly stated in the text. A conclusion or generalization is dependent on the information in a text but is external to it.

An ability **to connect text to prior knowledge or experience** helps a reader identify personally with a text. A reader identifies similarities between what is being described, explained, or narrated and what he or she has experienced, heard or read about. A critical reader forms opinions about the content within a text during and after reading and is then able to develop his or her own ideas about information from a text.

As readers have more experiences with these skills and with increasingly complex texts, their cognitive abilities will increase as well. Experienced readers will be able not only to determine a main idea or message, but also to develop skills at **analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating a main idea or message** by making connections to ideas and messages expressed in other texts or to their personal experiences.